

Iowa Office of the State Long-Term Care Ombudsman

Deanna Clingan-Fischer
State Long-Term Care Ombudsman

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Machelle Shaffer
Phone: (o) 515/725-3312
(c) 515/745-3442
Email: machelle.shaffer@iowa.gov

Residents' Rights Month Reminds Iowans that Long-Term Care Residents Have Choices

Offering choice and honoring preferences are key points for a resident's quality of life

(Des Moines, IA) As we celebrate October as *National Resident's Rights Month*, we have the opportunity to focus on specific issues relating to the rights of our citizens residing in long-term care settings. One of those issues is personal choice. Residents have the right to participate in all decisions that impact them.

"Personal choice in everyday living helps residents in long-term care settings feel more independent and satisfied," Iowa's Long-Term Care Ombudsman Deanna Clingan-Fischer stated.

Residents have the right to the following choices:

- All residents are free to practice their religion and religious beliefs.
- All residents are free to associate, visit with and communicate in private with persons of the resident's choice. Residents must be permitted to participate in social, familial, religious, and community group activities of their choice either on or off of the facility grounds.
- All residents shall be allowed to rise at any time of their choice, provided the resident does not interfere with the rights of others.
- All residents are free to enter and leave the facility grounds as the resident chooses. If the facility desires, as stated in its written policies, it may require a resident to inform the facility at the times he/she is leaving and re-entering the facility grounds.
- All residents are allowed to form and participate in a resident council.
- All residents are permitted to voice complaints and recommend changes in policies, procedures, and services to the administrator, his or her designee, or to the residents' council.

"We all want to make choices in how we live our daily lives. Individuals residing in nursing facilities, assisted living and elder group homes are no exception. National Residents' Rights Month is an excellent opportunity to re-affirm our commitment to residents' rights and to honor and advocate for all of Iowa's long-term care residents," Iowa Long-Term Care Ombudsman Clingan-Fischer concluded.

To find out more about resident rights and how Iowans who reside in long-term care facilities can be helped to maintain their dignity and autonomy, contact the State Long-Term Care Ombudsman's Office at: www.iowaaging.gov or call toll-free: 866/236-1430.

This is the second in a series of four releases on National Resident Rights Month